Massachusetts Wildlife

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1970

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IN THIS ISSUE

THE COVER: A tough shot with a "bucks-only" law, but a sight to quicken the pulse of every Bay State sportsman. Reproductions of this painting by Robert Kuhn are now included in Kiekhaefer Mercury's collection of wildlife prints.

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SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT WORCESTER, MASS.

Editorial . . .

THE GOOD THINGS IN LIFE

REMEMBER the old days when a man could sit down at his bench and create with his hands, patiently breathing life into the inanimate and then, with an idea taken shape before him, sit back and say, this is part of me?

Today, in our panic-paced assembly line of living, there is little time for craft. We have swapped our souls for security and stand contented in our stalls, cows waiting to be milked. Our masters are the computers — painfully precise, metallic morons with high-voltage egos and stubborn streaks longer than their wire coils. If a computer decides that your name should be John Paulson instead of Paul Johnson or if it insists, over cancelled check, that you have failed to pay a twice-paid gas bill, no force on Earth will change its mind.

Reflecting on such "wonders" of modern technology, one grows morose. But, the other side of the coin, though not bright, is at least less dark. If we try, we can cheer ourselves with the resigned optimism of a "Mr. In-Between," for the good things in life have not vanished; they've simply thinned out a little.

We find ourselves caught up in the "although . . . there is still" syndrome. Example: Although trout habitat is deteriorating, there is still trout fishing to be had. Although the bald eagle is on its deathbed as a species, there is still the possibility, however remote, of seeing an eagle, somewhere.

Artisans, like trout and eagles, are still with us, but you have to look harder for them now, and when you find them you appreciate them that much more. You still run across men like Ed Shaw and Sewell Dunton from time to time. Watch them at their work — master craftsmen, still creating with their hands, still clinging with old fingers, to their dying art.

— T.W.

ED Shaw, master taxidermist and long-time friend of the Division, has volunteered to mount specimens of every legally-harvestable waterfowl in the state, as a donation to our museum. The gift, which will eventually include over 70 individual mounts, will come as an important step in the Division's effort to expand its native wildlife displays.

Ed started his career more than 50 years ago, as a Chelsea schoolboy, working nights for the old M. Abbott Fraser Company — a furrier-taxidermy concern, considered at the time to be the best in the country. He learned from the experts.

Ed with the first eight mounts.

always alert, always taking note of their thousand little tricks.

In 1923, he graduated from high school and went to work for the Fraser company as a full-time apprentice. Nine years later he was on his own, an experienced craftsman on his way to a brilliant career.

We made Ed's acquaintance at the Boston Sportsman's Show many years ago. Ed first attended the show in 1932. Since that time, he has displayed his work annually, the only exception being the two war years — '43 and '44.

It was also at the Sportsman's Show that Ed met Mr. Benson, founder of Benson's Wild Animal Farm, and the late Dr. John C. Phillips (for whom our Phillips Wildlife Lab, now called Westboro Field Headquarters, was named). Phillips, one of the most colorful outdoor figures in the state's history and perhaps the first big-time conservationist in New England, led the fight to save the heath hen, and donated the original land for the Boxford Sanctuary in 1922. Today, there are few hunters who are not conservationists, but sadly, with the general public's faulty knowledge of population dynamics — as exhibited in our own population as well as in our sometimes emotional approach to the cold facts of biology — many

would-be conservationists remain adamantly opposed to any and all hunting. Phillips was both hunter and conservationist and, like most experts in both fields, he was able to view the total wildlife picture, objectively. His contribution to hunting and to conservation (two words more synonym than antonym) has proved invaluable to all those who love the great outdoors. The Boone and Crockett record book is still riddled with his records and if you visit Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, you can see the heads of these animals, all gifts from Dr. Phillips and expertly mounted by his beloved friend, Ed Shaw.

With plastic mounts becoming more and more popular, and "hurry-up hackers" engaging in taxidermy only as a sidelight to the tackle business, master craftsmen like Ed are rare today. Unless they have a good name and a number of assistants, most taxidermists have a hard time making it alone and are often forced to branch out into other fields. Not Ed. He still can spend a full day on an 18-pound striper. There aren't too many people in the business today that could afford to do that.

Ed doesn't plan to retire, but unlike so many taxidermists who are dropping out of the field today, he could walk off the job tomorrow and leave the entire responsibility of running the shop to his three skilled assistants. They've learned the little tricks from him just as he learned them from the old Fraser Company experts.

Bill Pitrone handles most of the skinning — animals and birds. He sews up holes, and patches broken wings with wire splints.

"Woodcock are the hardest birds," says Bill. "Their skin is paper-thin and if you're not careful you'll rip them to shreds."

Ducks are a problem, too. Bill has to remove every bit of fat with scissors and a scraper. If he misses any, it will run later, turning the feathers yellow.

After Bill has skinned a bird, he washes the hide in Axion and water to remove bloodstains, then wrings it out like a wet washcloth. It's still damp though, so he puts it into a rotating, sawdust-filled drum, for drying. After about 20 minutes, the skin is taken from the drum, cleaned under a blower and is ready for mounting.

At this point, Joe Bono usually takes over. He wraps excelsior with

Ed casts an appraising eye at assistant Burt Robbins as he tacks on the hide of a wild boar.

Ed smooths the plaster-cast head of the biggest tuna taken on the Cape this year, while Burt (right) displays original mold made by lowering the actual head into wet plaster.

string for the main body, then sticks in wire in appropriate places to support neck, wings and legs.

The bird takes on shape rapidly as Joe sews, stuffs and bends. He inserts eyes, paints bill and legs, then wraps the plumage with cotton string. The skin dries and tightens around the feathers, holding them in place. Two weeks later the strings are cut away, revealing the finished product.

Burt Robbins, with occasional assistance from Joe, handles most of the fish. After he's cleaned the meat out and scraped the skin (the hardest part), he carves a body out of styrofoam. When it's in place and the skin is sewn up around it, Burt rubs the fleshy areas with 99½% pure borax. This dries it and guards it against moths and maggots. A few years ago, taxidermists used arsenic paste. It did just about the same thing, "but," says Burt "if you had a hangnail, you were in trouble."

Animals don't vary in size as much as fish so Burt, the specialist in the head department, orders

Bill Pitrone touches up the bridgework of a red fox trophy. Picture on right shows him polishing white-tail rack.

Now in the final stages of mounting a ruffed grouse, Joe Bono inserts eye and adjusts beak.

Ed's three assistants in crowded shop.

ready-made, pressed paper forms in appropriate sizes.

The hides of the large animals, regardless of whether the trophy will be a head or body mount, are sent to the tannery for about three months. When a head skin comes back, Burt soaks it in water, then stretches it over a form (already rubbed with a thick, brown paste). The skin dries and shrinks to the form. Then, after he inserts the eyes and tacks down loose edges of the hide, he begins the finishing touches. All holes are filled with wax, a plastic tongue and teeth are inserted and cemented into place. Finally, he finishes around nose and eyes with a fine paintbrush, and the trophy's ready.

Editor's note: Ed has already given us eight mounts, but he still needs 62 birds. So, to speed things up, Director of Fish and Game, James M. Shepard, is taking this opportunity to ask Bay State sportsmen for contributions. If you shoot one of the following birds during the legal season and you want to contribute to a good cause, why not give it to the museum. Your bird will be part of a lasting monument to our outdoor heritage, something every one of us in Massachusetts can take great pride in.

WE NEED BOTH SEXES OF: The American merganser, hooded merganser, red-breasted merganser, mallard, blue-winged teal, European teal and European widgeon (both incidental), baldpate, pintail, shoveller, canvasback, scaup, ring-necked duck, oldsquaw, goldeneye, Barrow's goldeneye (incidental), harlequin duck, northern eider, king eider, common eider, surf scoter, white-winged scoter, ruddy duck, black brant (incidental), and American brant.

In addition to the above, we need: a male green-winged teal, a male wood duck, a male lesser scaup, a female bufflehead, a female black duck, and a female Canada goose.

Although blue, snow and white-fronted geese are not legal game in Massachusetts, legally taken out-of-state contributions will be gratefully accepted.

Ed suggests that sportsmen who wish to contribute to the museum, carry cotton in their hunting jackets. As soon as you retrieve your bird, stuff bits of cotton down nostrils and mouth and under wings if they're broken or bleeding. (This, Ed points out, makes cleaning far easier.) When you get home, seal your prospective mount in a plastic bag and freeze it if you can't get to Everett that day. Delivery can be made any time, but make sure it's during the legal season.

All contributions should be dropped off at Ed's studio — 742 Broadway, U.S. Route 1, Everett.

EARTH DAY HONOR ROLL

by TED WILLIAMS

THROWING subtlety to the sulfurous wind, *Quincy High* students donned gas masks, raincoats, boots, back placards, and went tramping off through Quincy streets distributing information on air pollution to gaping onlookers.

The Science Club, relying heavily on an ingenious smoking machine, conducted 30 assemblies, over the course of the year, aimed at alerting students to the dangers of lung deterioration.

-information provided by
John W. Chrusciel, Quincy High School, Quincy

Nestled in a lush, 27-acre tract in eastern Massachusetts, Norwell's *William G. Vinal School* was happily in a position to do more than just talk and consider.

Going right to the primary source — Nature herself — sixth graders under the supervision of Mary Plemmons and Robert Payne, cut and marked trails, learning in the process.

Another class prepared identification charts for leaves, then labeled trees and bushes found along the trails.

Inside, students experimented with soil samples, testing for acidity and percolation. In one experiment, pairs of students were given carpenter ants, salt and sugar. They then prepared obstacle courses on their desk tops, released the ants and recorded time and movements on a running data sheet.

-information provided by
Phyllis H. Buell, William G. Vinal School, Norwell

Earth Day at *Monument Mountain Regional High* cut into the consciences of all who participated with a brutal self-assessment of our own species.

After the usual skits, songs, films, etc., Monument Mountain students engaged in a chilling "Death March" that has to rank near the top in Earth Day originality.

Daring to contemplate what has been called "the worst crime man is capable of committing" (the destruction of a species), black-hooded figures paraded across the stage,

Editor's note: This is the third in a four-part series reporting on Earth Day and related activity in Massachusetts schools. To date, over 100 schools throughout the state have responded to our original form letter and reports are still coming in.

each with a black placard bearing the name of one of the 150-odd species that have ceased to exist as a direct or indirect result of man's activities during the last two centuries.

-information provided by
Charles Pope and Michael Pelle, Monument Mountain Regional High, Great Barrington

Earth Day at *William Diamond Junior High* was sponsored by the Forestry and Conservation Club, social studies classes and Science Department. High points in the program were a publicity campaign, a Clean-up and a school assembly.

-information provided by
William Diamond Junior High, Lexington

Twenty-three third graders at *Bourne Schools* were the first students to enjoy a post Earth Day course at the town's new Frank Leary Conservation Site, a 14-acre outdoor classroom purchased for that purpose by the Bourne Conservation Commission. Principal negotiators were Paul Innis, Ronald Haley and Assistant Director of Fish and Game, Russell Cookingham.

Among the many plants previously tagged with numbers were: red oak, wild strawberry, birch, pitch pine, wild cherry, Japanese quince, violets, cedar, locust, honeysuckle, white lilac, hemlock and maple.

Under the supervision of science teacher Paul Innis (former Conservation Commission member), and third grade teacher Mrs. Jean Holland, the children attempted to identify tagged plants, then checked their botanical I.Q.'s on answer sheets.

-information provided by
Paul Innis, c/o Supt. of Schools, Bourne

Two murals were designed by two second grade classes at Norwell's *G.F. Cole School* — one depicting an "Earth Without Pollution," the other "Earth Today."

Other activities included a trip to the New England Aquarium and a backyard trash patrol.

According to Principal Walter H. Kaetzer, the children "did an extremely good job of taking the message home and extending their sense of responsibility to their parents."

-information provided by
Walter H. Kaetzer, G.F. Cole School, Norwell

Students of Attleboro's *Bliss School* took an artistic approach to Earth Day by displaying exhibits of appropriate paintings throughout the school building.

-information provided by
James Q. Calista, Bliss School, Attleboro

Andover High students worked side by side with faculty members and a local conservation group to give the Shawsheen River a thorough face-lifting.

A slide show and environmental films were made by students and are now available for private organizations.

-information provided by
Hartley Peakes, Andover High School, Andover

At Winthrop's *E.B. Newton School,* one science class conducted detailed experiments in an effort to study the principles of erosion. The class recorded the effects of water flowing down a hillside (with and without trees), built a dam with milk cartons and studied the effects of contour plowing.

-information provided by
Arthur T. Cummings, E.B. Newton School, Winthrop

(Continued on Page 13)

THE LOST ART

by Pete Marshall

THE art of making handcrafted, split bamboo rods is one of those skills that is fast fading in the waning years of the technical twentieth century. With the advent of the fiberglass rod, which is cheaper and faster to build, the bamboo specialist has taken a back seat in popularity but still serves a large and steadfast clientele. The argument over which rod is superior will go on for as long as two fishermen meet under the same roof.

With only three manufacturers left on the east coast, Bay State fishermen are more than fortunate to have one of these firms within their border. Sewell N. Dunton is still building rods in the Town of Greenfield where it has been "business as usual" for the past thirteen years. Prior to this location, Mr. Dunton worked for the old Montague Rod Co., joining that firm in the late '20's. You'd have to go a country mile to find someone else who knows the tackle business like this old Yankee.

With talented helpers like Andy Rewa, Lorretta White and Joe Leveille, Mr. Dunton is still carrying on a passing art. So for those who enjoy a fine split bamboo rod, I hope the next few pages of photos will give you a little more appreciation for that wonderful stick you own.

1. **Coloring and tempering of the raw cane.**
2. **Andy rough-sanding the knots.**
3. **Cutting for correct length.**
4. **Hand-splitting into sixteen segments.**
5. **Segments are planed to remove excess.**
6. **Segments are then milled for final shape.**

"I sneaked up behind that one."

Answer to Crossword

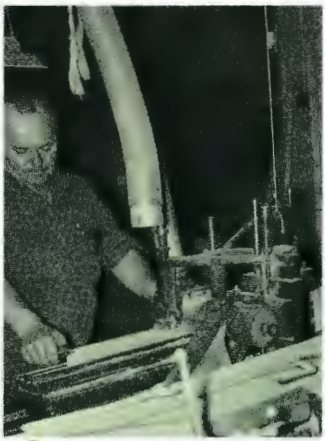
1

2

3

4

5



6

7 Half-milled section.

8 Six milled segments ready for glueing.

9 Rod section dipped in hot glue.

10 Glued section being wrapped — 200 lb. pressure.

11 Butt section glu and wrapped.

12 Rod section rolled and straightened.

13 Removal of dry glue and wrapping.

(14) Rough turning of cork grip.

(15) Final sanding of grip.

(16) Finished cork grip ready for rod.

(17) Matching of butt and tip sections.

(18) Hand filing to remove "Bark" and expose enamel of Bamboo.

ied

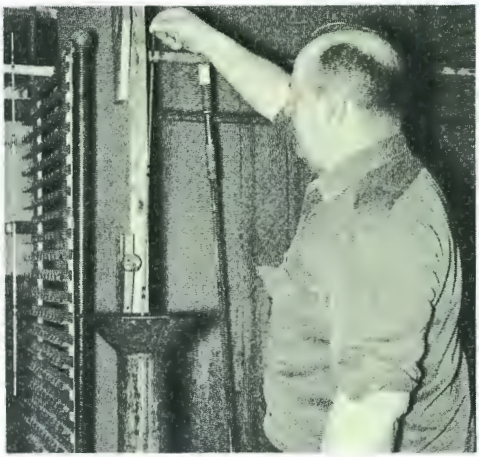
(19) Hand fitting ferrules.

(21) Heat and block treatment to remove set.

(20) Final check for straightness.

(22)

(23)



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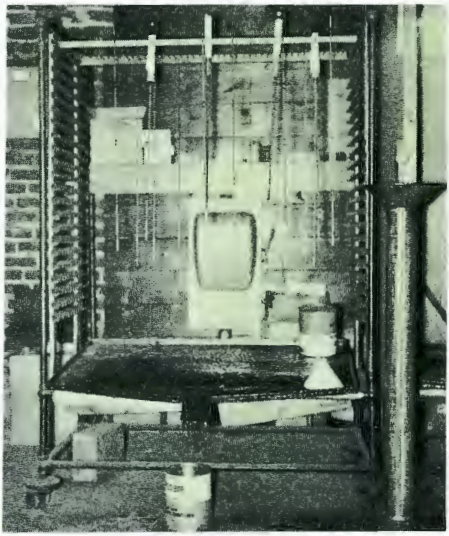


(25)

(26)

(27)

(22) **Hand wrapping guides.**

(23) **Color preserver on wrappings.**

(24) **Hand dipping in varnish.**

(25) **Completed rods in drying rack.**

(26) **Peeling varnish from metal ferrules.**

(27) **Mr. Dunton with finished product.**

(Continued from Page 7)

Earth Day activity at the *Holliston Middle School,* involved two major projects. Under the direction of the art teachers, fifth and sixth grade students painted posters emphasizing the necessity of waiting until the opening day of fishing season.

And, on Saturday, May 9, sixty eighth graders, in cooperation with the town highway department, cleaned the shore and surrounding park areas of Holliston's two beach facilities on Lake Winthrop.

-information provided by
Holliston Middle School, Holliston

Tom MacDonald, Esten Elementary School teacher and Science Coordinator for the Rockland Grammar Schools, rallied the town's youth together and led them on a nearly impossible campaign to change the town dump into an 18-acre nature park.

If you've ever scuffled through the beer cans of Hartsuff Park or tripped over the rusty skeletons of abandoned automobiles, walk that route again. It's changed a little. What was once an outdoor restroom has been miraculously transformed to a nature museum with a zoo of domestic animals behind it. The junk has disappeared and in its place is the town's only swimming facility. Two nature trails wind through a mixed stand of cedars, pines, birth, and maples and "wildflowers are everywhere." That's "progress" — in its real sense.

-information provided by
Esten School, Rockland

The Future Farmers of America (FFA Chapter) at *Silver Lake Regional Vocational High School* in Kingston sponsored a Teach-In that was two months in the making. Invitations went out to town officials, Fire Chiefs, Natural Resource officers, U.S. Game Management agents, educators and private citizens.

The Teach-In itself examined every aspect of environmental damage through the specialized lens of a particular study. For example, biology students took a look at population dynamics while physics classes weighed the pros and cons of nuclear energy as a power source. Other academic-environmental combos were: chemistry — air pollution; Earth science — effects of mining on the environment; American history — development of the frontier ethic; world history — a survey of land abuse through the ages; home economics — the consumer and the throw-away culture; psychology — stress and overcrowding; math — the role of statistics in population projections; and music — noise pollution.

-information provided by
FFA Chapter, Silver Lake Regional Vocational High School, Kingston

In the *Shrewsbury school system,* one enterprising seventh grade class formed an organization called the Junior Campaign on the Conservation of Wildlife. Disgusted by mankind's unrelenting harassment of the timber wolf, the group circulated a petition across the country, then sent it to President Nixon.

After collecting information from magazines, Senators, Governors and conservation organizations, the group prepared and distributed pamphlets and spoke over the local radio station in defense of one of the noblest animals in North America.

-information provided by
Shrewsbury School System, Shrewsbury

Grade six at the *Florence School* made large colored posters depicting Man and the debts he's incurred through his reckless deficit spending of Earth's resources. The posters were turned over to the Smith College Committee in charge of ecology and displayed in Pulaski Square.

-information provided by
the Florence School, Florence

"Roses are red; smoke is black, so is the air so let's fight back!" was the kind of catchy jingle featured in *Pollution News,* an environmental newspaper established April 22, 1970 by the eighth grade reading classes at *King Philip Regional Junior High* in Norfolk. All sales revenue was and will continue to be donated to the state to fight pollution.

On June 4, the students met with Governor Sargent and presented him with a copy of their publication along with the money they had collected from newspaper sales in the Towns of Plainville, Norfolk and Wrentham.

-information provided by
Mrs. Theresa Magistro, King Philip Reg. Junior High, Norfolk

At *Westborough Junior High,* Science Department Head Danial Phaneuf, played a "dirty" trick on his students by secretly suspending all janitorial duties.

"Crud Week," like all good medicine, tasted terrible and although it may have offended eyes and nostrils, it made a positive point with a powerful negativism. Phaneuf feels that the Clean-up procedure can be harmful in that "the students, relating only to what they see, tend to think they've licked the pollution problem."

-information provided by
Danial Phaneuf, Westboro Junior High, Westboro

The Lancaster Public Schools participated in Earth Day by devoting the week of May 4 to teaching ecology at all grade levels. Some of the activities included plays, discussions, and a letter campaign directed at the Attorney General.

-information provided by
Frank H. Mitchell, Superintendent, Lancaster Public Schools

The meeting of the Association of American Sciences proved to be the prime mover in pushing *Avon Junior High* students into a flurry of Earth Day activity.

First, a three-week ecology unit was planned. Students compiled and distributed a booklet entitled "Pollution, the Deadly Killer," and prepared posters for halls, walls, and windows.

-information provided by
Miss Connick, Avon Junior High School, Avon

"I didn't put it there, but I'll pick it up!"

-courtesy of Greenwood-Yeuell Schools.

-courtesy of FFA Chapter, Silver Lake Regional Vocational High School, Kingston.

Weymouth High's Conservation Club, now in its fifth year, extended its scope to include community projects last January. In early March 150 students gathered to clean the Weymouth Herring Run. Herring were understandably scarce but debris wasn't. The children collected three tons of it during the course of a full Saturday.

Later on in March, the Club presented "An Evening of Conservation" for the townspeople, with slides, movies and a keynote address by DNR Commissioner Brownell.

In April, the Club received the state conservation award for the second time and on Earth Day, members participated individually in assemblies conducted by the Social Studies Department.

-information provided by
Mary F. Toomey, Weymouth High, Weymouth

As a part of a science unit on conservation, a fifth grade class at the *Maria Hastings School* visited the Fiske Hill Environmental study area in Lexington.

Later in the day, an environmental debate was held with another fifth grade class.

-information provided by
Renee Sack, Maria Hastings School, Lexington

At Foxborough's *Robinson Hill School* students spelled out pollution dangers on stage in "Beware the Genies," a chilling environmental drama by Claire Boiko.

Other Earth Day activities included a poster display in local store windows and a letter campaign directed at local, state and federal leaders.

-information provided by
Robinson Hill School, Foxborough

Other schools participating in before-mentioned activities — clean-ups, poster campaigns, films, bulletin board displays, discussions and gardening — were: *Nantucket Junior High; Central Grammar School,* Gloucester; the *Armstrong School,* Westboro; *Greenwood and Yeuell Schools,* Wakefield; the *M.L. Town School,* Acton; the *Studley Elementary School,* Attleboro; *Center School,* South Hadley; *Highland School,* Holyoke; and the *Finberg School,* Attleboro.

-information provided by
Antone Dias; Robert Sampson; Director of Elementary Education, Westboro; Nat Finklestein; James Palavras; Melvin Adams; Adah Carey; Highland School, Holyoke; and Patricia Mosley, respectively.

Next year's licenses will be available at City and Town Clerks' offices well before the Christmas rush. So, if there's a sportsman in the family, and you're sick of crowded stores where prices are going up and quality's going down, why not pick him up a fishing or hunting license or, better still, a "sporting license" which covers both.

The Strangest Sport Afloat

by
TED WILLIAMS

I took one step and sank slowly into the black void of a moonless August night. For an instant there was a warm trickle over my knees, then both waders filled with a "sloosh" and I knew it was going to be an evening I'd never forget.

Somehow (I was still asking myself how) I'd been lassoed into filling in for honeymooning Harry Heusmann, one of the Division's notorious airboat banders. The other two members of the night's crew — Jim Cardoza and Peter Pekkala — were already in the airboat somewhere in front of me. I found a hand in the darkness and hoisted myself out of the sucking mud and up onto the fiberglass deck. My legs grew heavy as they left the water, and under the waders gravelly duck weed ground against my dungarees. Jim greeted me, glowing with sadistic cordiality — "Welcome aboard."

He was lecturing me on netting technique when Peter cranked up the gasoline generator and three 500-watt, quartz-iodide spotlights flared up, cutting a 200-foot swath through the blackness of Concord's Great Meadows wildlife refuge.

Then we were floating in the alien beauty of another world. Beside us, clusters of interwoven lotus leaves, each a foot in diameter, bobbed in the night breeze, their conical seed pods waving from slender stalks in slow, unearthly rhythm. I jabbed the bottom with my net and, all around us, the green mantle of algae bubbled like a witch's brew.

I twisted into a metal chair mounted on the deck and tried to listen to Jim over the drone of the generator.

"Don't scoop too deep. ...net down. ...in the weeds. Got it?"

"No!"

Peter hit the starter button on the airboat's bridge and the 125-horse Lycoming thundered to life, slamming us back into our seats. Behind us, a grove of cattails bent double in the blast, their silk billowing up in clouds. The noise was unbearable.

Jim tossed me a pair of earphone mufflers and I jammed them on, relaxing back into silence. At 30 miles per hour, we glided over weed beds; skirted brushy coves, spinning 360° on our tail, and cut through narrow canals where the slightest error in judgment could flip us on our side. On every turn, bullfrogs skittered frantically from our path. They were everywhere — thousands of them, dotting the marsh in all directions and watching us with vacant, goggling eyes. Turtles — both snappers and paints — were there too and in surprising numbers. Later, Peter told me he'd known a professional snapping-turtle hunter who had bagged over 200 from Great Meadows in a single night, then sold every one of them the next day on the New York market.

Ducks were the furthest thing from my mind when Peter tapped my shoulder and swung the boat around sharply. Jim tensed, pointing to a tiny floating island and, as we approached, the top cover of tangled vegetation quivered unnaturally. Suddenly three wood ducks shot out into the glare of the spotlights. One flushed, but the other two paddled in circles, nodding their heads idiotically, like a couple of brooding hens.

I eased the net over the side; I was going to have a shot at the smaller of the two. But now they suspected something. Their nodding tempo doubled and they paddled faster.

"Swat!" I had one. Out of the corner of my eye I saw his mate rise slowly into the air and flutter moth-like past Jim's flailing net. I thought Peter was yelling instructions at me, but I couldn't hear him through the ear muffs.

With my net face down over the wildly-floundering duck, I tried for the quick scoop that would double the net, but the water was only inches deep and, to make matters worse, Peter had just spotted another flock. We started after them, my net slipping slowly through my straining hands. Taking advantage of the current, the duck rolled out under the rim and went quacking triumphantly off into the darkness. Jim offered his condolences by pushing two flapping mallards into my gut. I needed a third hand to open the crate and a fourth to hold my net, but somehow I popped the birds into the hole and snatched the tip of the net handle as it slid over the side.

Peter was already bearing down on another flock. (I was beginning to understand why airboat banders are a sullen, fitful lot.) Our strategy, he explained to me later, had been to break up the large flocks and force them into the weeds beds. For an hour we patroled the lagoon, charging into shoals of birds. Jim usually managed to bag one on every pass, but when Peter shut down the engine for refueling, all I had to show for my effort was a strained wrist, assorted bruises and a handful of soggy tail feathers. Now, whenever we'd spot birds, Peter would instinctively approach from Jim's side and it was getting downright embarrassing.

I'd about given up hope when a fat black flushed in front of us and, confused by the lights, crossed low over our bow. Seeing my chance at last, I reached up with the net and scooped him out of mid-air. At first, he was too startled to struggle, but when I got my hands on him he went at it with a vengeance. A duck's strength and durability is astounding. It's nearly impossible to injure one when capturing it, unless the metal rim of the net happens to hit his head. The idea is to enfold the wings quickly with your hands, then push the bird through the trapdoor on the banding cage before he realizes what's happening. But this black, and a number of other ducks I handled that evening, had other ideas. In several bouts, the only appendage I could get a grip on was the neck. In others it was a wing or a leg, yet there was never any evidence of injury and each bird, ex-

cept for one bedraggled teal, bolted eagerly into the air after banding.

We left the first crate of ducks — about 25 — with the shore crew, already busily engaged in banding and taking blood samples from the evening's live-trap catch. Then, carrying an empty crate, we paddled back out onto the marsh to continue the roundup. But now, with most of the birds holed up in the thicker cover, Peter left the lagoon and gunned the boat right into the lotus growth. Here, things were entirely different. In most places, a net was out of the question and we had to kneel on the bow, snatching at ducks with our hands. This called for hair-splitting precision on Peter's part and lightning reflexes on ours. Peter would follow the moving lotus leaves and we'd lean out as far as we could, sometimes jumping out after a duck that was just beyond reach. If we could grab one out of five we were doing well, but even with the low catch percentage, this technique seemed to be the most productive — as well as the most exhausting. At one point, Jim was passing me ducks faster than I could stuff them into the cage.

Once, I reached down for a dark object and came within inches of picking up a muskrat, but the light caught his whiskered face just in time and my hand snapped back like a spring. The fat little fellow blinked, dropped his mouthful of tubers and dove for cover.

We continued through the lotus with Peter stopping the engine each time we left the boat. Finally, he stopped it once too often and the battery gave out. By this time, however, the second crate was nearly full and Jim decided to call it a night. As we paddled toward shore, the two airboat pros assessed the night's haul — 38 ducks.

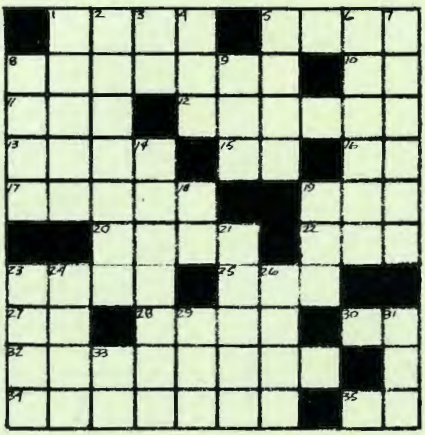
"Not bad, not bad at all," they conceded. Then, grinning at me, Peter dropped the clincher — "considering."

Above: George Booth, President of the Lynn Fish and Game Protective Association, presents James M. Shepard with a plaque "in recognition of his vision, skill and dedication in the performance of his duties as Massachusetts Fish and Game Director; his untiring efforts in the conservation of our fish and game resources; and most of all for being a good and valuable friend to the sportsmen, 1970."

Pictured above with his wife is Dr. Reuben E. Trippensee, noted author, Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Management at U. Mass. and one of the first scholars to earn a Doctor of Philosophy in Wildlife Management. The plaque in center was recently erected in his honor by former students, at Amherst's Holdsworth Natural Resources Center.

ACROSS

1. Hollow space
5. Man's best friends
8. Inside diameter of the barrel of a rifle
10. Ruthenium (chem. abbrev.)
11. Daily bag limit on Jack Rabbit in Massachusetts
12. Signal light used to guide or give warning
13. Drags
15. Left Guard (abbrev.)
16. Underwater Demolition (abbrev.)
17. Net
19. Greatest country (abbrev.)
20. Bird
22. A low island; reef
23. Brew of malt and hops
25. I am, he is, we _____
27. Chopping tool
28. Cattle (arch.)
30. Are moose and turkey legal game in Massachusetts?
32. Muffler for a firearm
34. Pursued game
35. Underwriters' Laboratories (abbrev.)



DOWN

1. Small, narrow boat, pointed at both ends, propelled by paddles
2. Small, anadromous fish related to the herring (see *Mass. Wildlife* Jan-Feb. 1970)
3. Roman numeral for daily bag limit on shad
4. To recede, as the tide
5. Device on fishing reel used to alter pressure on fish
6. Game bird with feathered legs. Bag limit of three in Massachusetts
7. Unlawful to hunt in Mass. on this day
8. Portable beds of canvas
9. Fish shaped like a snake
14. Apparatus used for breathing under water
18. Opposite compass points
19. Ukulele (slang)
21. Long shaft
23. Popular game fish
24. A passage out
26. Tall grass with hollow, jointed stalk ___ grows in wet places
29. Writing fluid
31. Nocturnal raptor protected in Mass.
33. Louisiana (abbrev.)

Answer on page 8

Man and The Balance

Money Down the Drain

Most pollution, believe it or not, could be a valuable natural resource but, like so many of the others, it's going to waste. For example, the Massachusetts Division of Water Pollution Control is presently investigating four industries throughout the Commonwealth in an effort to put a brake on mercury contamination. Companies in Massachusetts, and in every other state in the Union, insist that it would be next to impossible to extract mercury from the weak but steady concentrations now entering our environment — impossible now perhaps, but to say "never" is to don the black cloak of defeatism and to say "why bother?" is treason. A society that can traverse space to walk in the chill vacuum of another world or switch human organs like spare auto parts could, with a little energetic research, develop a cheap and efficient means of extracting mercury from industrial waste — regardless of present "economic feasibility." It is perhaps unfair to ask the companies to go it alone, but their investment and the taxpayers' investment might reap rich dividends, sooner than you'd think. As mercury brings a modest $2,200 a gallon, the revenue collected after the initial investment had been "paid off" could be "recycled" into our conservation agencies so that they could start to check the whirlwind of ecological havoc chemical contaminants such as mercury have unleashed on our environment.

Before mercury pollution came into vogue as a national news maker, one concern on the shore of Lake St. Clair was dumping 200 pounds of mercury per day (570 gallons per year). That's $3,500 a day (about $1.2 million a year) worse than wasted!

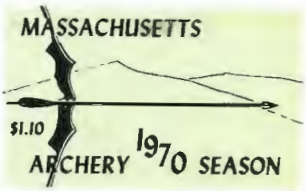
Retired Tires

Like ourselves, tires grow old, get soft and go bald, and when they do they're callously discarded and replaced with younger models. As of last June there were over 12,329,550 tires in use in Massachusetts — 17,261,370 if you count snow tires. Where will they wind up? Well, a few of the lucky ones will be retreaded; others will be nailed to docks for boat bumpers; some will be tied to trees as swings for little girls, and the rest will be junked. Many will turn up in our woods, rivers and streams where they'll sit in timeless testament to the world of rubber and cement, reminding every nature-loving sportsman that he can never really escape.

But every tire on the road today, with a little imagination, could be put to proper use. Our fisheries section, for instance, will shortly undertake soil support projects along certain Bay State trout streams. Slipping banks will be lined with tires, covered with loam and then planted over with grasses. This process brings erosion and stream siltation to a dramatic halt. Tires have also been used to build artificial reefs.

One of the most encouraging notes in the tire picture is the new Firestone plant in Akron, Ohio that will probably have started operation by the time this article has gone to press. Tires will be melted down in a thermal reactor, then separated into 45% solids and 55% gases and liquids. The solids may be useful as a filtering medium in tertiary sewage treatment or may be incorporated into concrete, whereas the gas and liquid fractions can be broken down into 50 organic compounds that will be valuable as fuel or feed stock for chemical plants.

A 600-foot strip of busy roadway at the University of Missouri's Rolla Campus is being paved over with "glasphalt," a smooth, asphalt surfacing with a composition base of crushed glass. When the job's finished, cars will glide over 720,000 crushed bottles and jars. Old glass may also be used in the production of bricks, glass wool insulation, vitrified sewer pipe, reflector material, grit for chickens, and new glassware. Most glass container plants in the U.S. will soon be melting and recycling used glass . . . so, the future looks a little brighter and a lot less cluttered.



ARCHERY STAMP COMPETITION

THE three stamps on the top row and the first two in the second row show the five archery stamp designs used over the last decade. Only color changes in '62, '63, '65, and '69 have rescued us from monotony.

So, to inject a little life into our worn-out stamp collection, the I and E Section sent out a news release — 7/15/70 — soliciting free-lance contributions. However, only two responses were forthcoming — one imaginative design by Arthur (Rocky) Booth, age 10 of Hampden (lower left), and three potential winners by *Boston Globe* illustrator, Cyril Neuwelt. One of Mr. Neuwelt's designs (center, bottom row) has been selected for this year's archery stamp.

If you think you have a flair for drawing, send us a design for a future year. The following should appear somewhere on the stamp: "Massachusetts Archery Season," "$1.10," "19--." Winning contributions will be acknowledged.

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